

NRHP: 2-18-75
NRHP: 6.5-75

127-274

Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Virginia
COUNTY:	Richmond (city)
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	

1. NAME	
COMMON:	Third Street Bethel A.M.E. Church
AND/OR HISTORIC:	Third Street Bethel A.M.E. Church

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 616 North Third Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Richmond		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Third (David E. Satterfield III)	
STATE: Virginia	CODE: 51	COUNTY: (in city)	CODE: 760

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PUBLIC ACQUISITION: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered			
ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No			
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNER'S NAME: Rev. E. William Judge			
Congregation of the Third Street Bethel A.M.E. Church			
STREET AND NUMBER: 616 North Third Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Richmond		STATE: Virginia	CODE: 51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Richmond City Hall			
STREET AND NUMBER: 900 East Broad Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Richmond		STATE: Virginia	CODE: 51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey			
DATE OF SURVEY: 1974			
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission			
STREET AND NUMBER: 221 Governor Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Richmond		STATE: Virginia	CODE: 51

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia	COUNTY: Richmond (city)
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)
☐ Excellent ☒ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐ Ruins ☐ Unexposed

(Check One)

☒ Altered☐ Unaltered

(Check One)

☐ Moved☒ Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church stands on the west side of North Third Street in downtown Richmond. It is a large Victorian Gothic building with two-story towers flanking a central gable.

As originally built around 1857, the building was entered at ground-floor level through a central door under a tall lancet window. When the exterior was remodeled in 1875, the entrance was placed at sanctuary (first-floor) level by closing up the lower portion of the lancet window, cutting two new doorways into the facade, and building steps up to the new entrances with a porch roof over the landing.

When these changes were made, a pressed-brick facade and much new detailing was added. The present gable cornice of the church consists of a guilloche band over stylized machicolations. The gable is crowned by an elaborate finial. Its truncated lancet window has quatrefoils in its geometric tracery which is separated from the diamond panes of colored glass in the lower portion by a wooden spandrel with square recessed panels.

The towers have articulated corner piers, a dentil cornice, and low pedimented cross gables. Two tiers of lancet windows pierce the open sides of each tower. These feature quatrefoils and diamond panes of colored glass similar to those in the gable window, but the wooden spandrel of the lower window in each pair has lancet-shaped, rather than square, recessed panels.

The church's sanctuary was also redecorated in 1875. It is a very plain room whose principal embellishment is the full-height, two-centered arch which frames the organ pipes at the altar end. The molded spandrels of this arch are each decorated with a boss, and the pipes are lit from behind by a triangular window in the gable end wall.

A gallery extends around three sides of the room, its balustrade consisting of an arcade of diminutive lancet arches similar to that of the altar rail. Recessed panels face the lower portion of the gallery which is supported on Doric columns. A pressed-metal ceiling, a pair of quatrefoil windows flanking the altar area, and symmetrically molded door trim with bull's-eye blocks complete the decoration of the room which also retains its nineteenth-century slip pews.

Most of the rest of the building, consisting of numerous small service rooms and a fellowship hall below the sanctuary, has been altered. The only early ornament in these rooms is the symmetrically molded door trim.

DTU

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian ☐ 16th Century ☐ 18th Century ☐ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century ☐ 17th Century ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1857; 1875

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church was built around 1857 to house one of the first congregations in Virginia to join the African Methodist Episcopal denomination. It was in this simple ante-bellum Gothic building that the Virginia Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1867, a move that symbolized the ascendancy of Southern Negroes immediately after the War Between the States.

The African Methodist Episcopal denomination originated in Philadelphia in 1784, when Richard Allen, a black Methodist, became dissatisfied with the church and left to form his own. In 1816 he organized the first conference of A.M.E. churches, again at Philadelphia.

Black Methodists in the South could not as easily forsake the supervision of the white Methodist church. However, there were all-black congregations under white control within the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Bethel group was one. It was gathered in the old Trinity Methodist Church in Richmond and met there until the present Third Street building was erected for the congregation and its white pastor.

In 1863, the black Methodists of St. John's Chapel in Norfolk broke away from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and affiliated themselves with the Baltimore Conference of the A.M.E. Church. At the urging of the Norfolk church, a conference was convened at the Bethel Church in Richmond on May 10, 1867, and there the Virginia Conference under Bishop Alexander Washington Wayman was set up.

The denomination and the congregation prospered, and in 1875 the exterior of the present church was remodeled with a stairway built to the new entrance at the sanctuary level and the pressed-brick facade added.

DTU

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Butts, I. L. History of African Methodism in Virginia. 1908.

Turner, Wesley Arnett. Norfolk Church Was First in Virginia. 1968.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA See continuation sheet #1

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: <u>Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff</u>		
ORGANIZATION <u>Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission</u>	DATE <u>January 1975</u>	
STREET AND NUMBER: <u>221 Governor Street</u>		
CITY OR TOWN: <u>Richmond</u>	STATE: <u>Virginia</u>	CODE <u>51</u>

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name Junius R. Fishburne, Jr.
Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Exec. Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
 Title _____

Date

FEB 16 1975

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



USGS 7½' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
Richmond, Va. 1964 (FR1963)

THIRD STREET BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH, RICHMOND,
UTM References:

18/284760/4158200